

Health Promotion Resource Guide

Evaluating a Weight Management Program



A Weight Management Program (WMP) evaluation is not worth doing if the information gathered will not be used. Plan ahead to gather useful information.

Use these six steps from the CDC Framework for Program Evaluation as a guide for program evaluation.

Steps 1 and 2: Engage stakeholders/describe the program

The most important stakeholders for the WMP are: **partners** (those that carry out any part of the WMP), **decision makers** (leadership and resource managers), and **participants**. Make sure all these stakeholders are involved in planning WMP activities, logistics, and evaluation.

Step 3: Focus on evaluation

The evaluation should be **useful** to the WMP implementer AND to initiative stakeholders. Ask WMP partners, decision makers, and participants what information **they** want to know. For example:

- Line commanders will want to know: how much **training/duty** time was conserved? How was Soldier **retention** affected?
- MTF leadership will want to know: how many Soldiers avoided being flagged for overweight? Did the WMP target risk factors in the population such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol?
- WMP implementers will want to know: which **activities** were **best received**, and why?
- Participants will want to know: what was their **progress** towards a healthier lifestyle?
- Resource Managers will want to know: what costs were **avoided**? Were the outcomes of the WMP worth the **investment**?

Step 4: Gather credible evidence

Evidence needs to be gathered to answer the questions developed in step 3. Use a mix of **quantitative** data (numbers of participants, specific program outcomes) and **qualitative** data (interviews or participant surveys).

HELPFUL HINT: Use program evaluation results to get Command support.

Step 5: Justify conclusions

Next, analyze the data, interpret the results, and make judgments about the program. Then, meet with the WMP stakeholders to go over these results. Discuss possible **alternative explanations** for the findings of the evaluation. Compare the results of the WMP to performance measures such as the Clinical Practice Guideline for treating obesity (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/sum_clin.htm).

Step 6: Ensure use of evaluation findings and share lessons learned

- When sharing lessons learned, consider the audience and use appropriate communications strategies. Also, consider the most effective format (report, fact sheet, slide presentation) and the best venue (installation newspaper, quarterly 1SGT meetings, weekly Commander's report).
- Create action-oriented recommendations to make sure the evaluation findings are used.
- For example, if Soldier drop-out rates are high for the WMP, implement a plan to increase support from unit leadership. Increase support by using WMP evaluation results and time/personnel/resource costs that result from Soldiers being flagged for overweight.

Bottom line

For more program evaluation resources, go to the CDC at: <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm>. Although the WMP evaluation should be planned for before the program begins, it is never too late to incorporate program evaluation into the WMP.

For more Health Promotion Resource Guides, go to <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhbw/Population/HPPI.aspx>.

For more information about the HPPI Program email: hppi_program_info@amedd.army.mil.